



Modern Fiction

Period A (Spring 2011)
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Mission of Windham High School:

Windham High School strives to personalize the educational experience for all students through smaller learning communities in an effort to create autonomous learners.

Our classrooms integrate twenty-first century skills through the authentic application of knowledge with extensive community involvement. The foundation for our career academies' pathways is rigor, relevance, and relationships.

WHS embraces the spirit of multiculturalism in a safe environment of readiness, respect, and responsibility for all members of our diverse community

Welcome to Modern Fiction!

What makes good fiction? In this class geared toward upperclassmen, we will work together to generate a common definition, and will then use those criteria to evaluate fiction that we read, in class and on our own. We will also use those criteria to build our own fiction pieces and will compile a portfolio on which we will reflect at the end of the semester.

As we read fiction written in the past 50-60 years, including novels, short stories, and narrative poetry, we will analyze and discuss:

- how cultural context influences the writing—and reading—of a text;
- issues embedded within a text (gender, political, et cetera);

This class also offers authentic opportunity to identify, analyze, and apply:

- literary elements including—but not limited to—imagery, symbolism, metaphor, and simile;
- deliberately selected elements of author's craft.

We will read modern fiction together, and we will also write it. You will be provided time to work on self-selected and/or teacher-facilitated projects throughout the semester in order to learn, practice, and hone new writing skills appropriate to task and audience. You will revise these pieces with the support of peer response groups, and will create multiple drafts of your work as part of the process of producing finished pieces.

Every student has the right to learn in a safe, friendly, and supportive environment. Therefore, the one overarching rule we have in our classroom is

RESPECT

for ourselves, for others, and for the learning environment. I do not tolerate any negative comments made about religion, race, ethnicity, intelligence, sexual orientation, physical or mental characteristics or any other disrespectful language. Please do not use that language, especially in our classroom—it is not “just playing.”

You will have homework in this course, whether it's reading, answering comprehension questions, filling out a graphic organizer, writing a paper, or working on a project. Any homework I assign will be necessary—I do not assign busywork! Please make sure to have assignments on the day they are due; if there are extenuating circumstances, please see me privately. If you are absent, you will have a window of makeup time equivalent to the number of days of absence (for example: if you are out for two days, you

have a two day “grace period” after your return before the work is due.) If your work is consistently handed in late, we will need to have a conversation as to why this is occurring, and put together a plan to address whatever issues exist.

Your quarterly classroom grades (excluding final exams) are broken up as follows:

Classwork/Writer’s Notebook	25%
Homework/Projects	25%
Quizzes	15%
Tests	20%
Preparedness/Participation	15%

I will provide each student with a Writer’s Notebook, a file folder for returning work, and a two-pocket Writer’s Portfolio for drafts-in-progress as well as finished pieces, which will be needed for a final self-assessment. In addition, you’ll need a one-subject notebook (or a dedicated section in a multi-subject notebook), a writing utensil, and your school-issued text for every class. Books issued by the school are your responsibility and must be kept in good condition.

Please arrive to class prepared. ***Arrival after the bell is considered tardy—even if it’s only a minute after the bell rings!*** I do have extra pencils or pens if you need them, and will loan them to you on a collateral basis (meaning that I need to keep a possession of yours in a safe place until you return the pen or pencil to me) but if I am checking for preparation that day, you will not be given full points for being totally prepared. Before you ask me, it is usually a better idea to ask a classmate if he or she has a pen or pencil you may borrow.

Because there are different grade levels and different backgrounds coming together in our class, I know that we have a lot to talk about and a lot to learn from each other. In order to make that happen, it’s important to participate. Remember, ***this is a safe classroom***. That means that, even if our class does not always agree, we will remain respectful of each other.

I look forward to a great semester together!

-Ms. Bowling